

NEWS RELEASE

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BERLIN COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER TO BENEFIT FROM \$900,000 FEDERAL GRANT

WASHINGTON— Coos County will soon benefit from an expansion of the Coos County Family Health Services Community Health Center in Berlin, New Hampshire, thanks to a \$906,750 grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. This expanded access point will be accomplished via the combination of CCFHS with the two Mountain Health Services sites in Berlin and Gorham and will provide comprehensive primary care services to individuals in the North Country, many of whom are low income or do not have health insurance.

Sens. Gregg, Sununu and Congressman Bass each contacted the Department of Health and Human Services in strong support of the grant application earlier this year. The \$906,750 federal grant for Berlin is one of the largest given out by the Department during this round of funding and will enable CCFHS to expand their targeted patient population by an additional 6,000 people.

Senator Gregg, Chairman of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee stated, “Ensuring that health care services are available to people throughout the state, and to those who need it most, is the driving force behind the awarding of this grant, and I could not be more pleased that the North Country is the recipient of such significant assistance. The entire region relies on CCFHS and this expansion will allow for a critically-needed scaling up of services to more North Country residents, who otherwise may have to travel great distances to access health care.”

“This funding represents a commitment by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to the health care needs of uninsured and elderly residents in Coos County. Through the resources in this grant, residents of New Hampshire’s northernmost communities, who are spread out over 1,855 square acres, will have access to additional health care providers closer to home,” said Senator Sununu, who wrote a letter to HHS Secretary Tommy Thompson on April 8, 2003 urging funding for the project.

“I am pleased that the delegation was successful in securing this substantial grant, which will allow North Country residents who rely on Coos County Family Health Services to continue

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to receive these critical services," said Representative Charles Bass (R-NH02). He added, "community health centers are one of the nation's best providers of care and they deserve our ongoing support as Congress continues to study better methods of delivery."

CCFHS has developed numerous health and social service programs targeting special populations, including the provision of comprehensive health care and preventive services to people of all ages in the greater Berlin NH area. Current services to approximately 6,000 residents of the Berlin area include: primary medical care, school-based oral health care, child health services, family planning, breast and cervical cancer screening, HIV testing and counseling, neuro-motor disabilities screening, perinatal care, WIC (Women, Infants and Children) nutrition program, testing and treatment of sexually-transmitted diseases, RESPONSE (for victims of domestic/sexual violence), diabetes program, infant massage and Medication Connection, a low cost drug program for patients of CCFHS.

This grant is part of a initiative by President Bush to expand the health center network over five years to add 1,200 new and expanded health centers and be able to serve more than 16 million people by 2006. Health centers deliver preventive and primary care to patients regardless of their ability to pay. Almost 40 percent of patients treated at health centers have no insurance coverage, and others have inadequate coverage. Charges for services are set according to income, and fees are not collected from the poorest clients.

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